REMARKS

An excess claim fee payment letter is submitted herewith for nine (9) excess total claims.

Applicant's representative again would like to thank Examiner Hewitt for courtesies extended in the productive, personal interview conducted on December 2, 2004, prior to the issuance of the non-final Office Action after RCE.

Claims 1-14, 16, 17, and 19-33 are all the claims presently pending in the application.

New claims 25-33 are added to provide more varied protection for the invention, in accordance with the features discussed in the personal interview conducted on December 2, 2004. Particularly, new claims 25-33 are added to define more clearly the claimed "*correspondence data*" and the claimed *affiliation* of the plurality of second client computers with the first client computer of the order (e.g., see specification at page 6, lines 2-13, page 15, lines 15-27, page 16, lines 10-25, page 17, lines 2-17, page 20, lines 1-16, page 25, lines 5-22; see also, e.g., Figures 5-13). No new matter is added.

It is noted that the claim amendments are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims or for any statutory requirements of patentability. Further, Applicant specifically states that no amendment to any claim herein should be

construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature of the amended claim.

Claims 1-14, 16, 17, and 19-24 stand rejected on prior art grounds.

Particularly, claims 1-7, 11-14, 16, 17, and 19-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Freedman (U.S. Patent No. 4,839,829) in view of Hartman, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,960,411). Claims 8-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Freedman in view of Hartman and further in view of Greulich, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,018,338).

These rejections are respectfully traversed in the following discussion.

I. THE CLAIMED INVENTION

The claimed invention is directed to an image ordering system and a method of an image ordering system.

An illustrative, non-limiting embodiment of an image ordering system as defined by independent claim 1, includes a center server, a first client computer for an orderer, and a plurality of second client computers for a laboratory that are capable of communicating data with one another. The first client computer includes an input unit for inputting data that specifies an image to be printed and a first transmitting unit for transmitting, to the center server, the image specifying data that is input from the input unit and data specifying the orderer.

The center server includes a memory for storing correspondence data in advance, the correspondence data representing which of the plurality of second client computers is *affiliated* with the first client computer of the orderer, a first receiving unit for receiving the image specifying data and the orderer specifying data transmitted from the first transmitting unit of the first client computer, a determination unit for determining, *on the basis of the correspondence data*, which of the plurality of second client computers *is affiliated with* the orderer specified by the orderer data received by the first receiving unit, and a second transmitting unit for transmitting the image specifying data and the orderer specifying data, which has been received by the first receiving unit, to one of the plurality of second client computers that has been determined by the determination unit *to be affiliated with* the orderer specified by the orderer data received by said receiving unit. Also, at least one of the plurality of second client computers includes a second receiving unit for receiving the image specifying data and the orderer specifying data transmitted from the second transmitting unit of the center server and a first alerting unit for giving notice of information regarding an image specified by the image specifying data and of an orderer represented by the orderer specifying data, which items of data have been received by the second receiving unit.

Independent claims 14, 16, 17, 19, and 22 recite somewhat similar features as independent claim 1.

The claimed invention, as defined by independent claims 1, 14, 16, 17, 19, and 22 is capable of determining, on the basis of correspondence data, which of the plurality of second client computers is affiliated with the orderer specified by the orderer data.

Thus, the claimed invention can transmit the image specifying data and the orderer specifying data to an *affiliated* second client computer out of a plurality of second client computers.

In other words, when there are a plurality of second client computers, the correspondence data can be transmitted accurately from the center server to an *affiliated* one of the plurality of second client computers, wherein an *affiliated* second client computer out of a plurality of second client computers is determined by the corresponding data transmitted from the first client computer (e.g., see specification at page 6, lines 2-13; and page 20, lines 1-16).

II. THE PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

A. Claims 1-7, 11-14, 16, 17, and 19-24:

Claims 1-7, 11-14, 16, 17, and 19-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Freedman in view of Hartman.

For the Examiner's convenience, the traversal arguments set forth in the previous Amendments filed on April 23, 2004 and September 17, 2004 are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

Applicant submits that there are elements of the claimed invention which would not have been disclosed or suggested by any combination of Freedman and Hartman, and therefore, respectfully traverses this rejection.

To establish that the claimed invention would have been obvious from Freedman and Hartman, it must be established that the ordinarily skilled artisan would have been motivated to modify Freedman based on the teachings of Hartman to arrive at the claimed combination and also that such a modification of Freedman based on Hartman, in fact, would arrive at the novel and unobvious combination of elements as recited in the claims, and in as complete detail as recited in the claims.

The Examiner takes the position that it would have been obvious to modify Freedman in view of Hartman, since Freedman allegedly allows a user to specify image ordering parameters (e.g., see Freedman at Figure 2B) such as selecting a particular printing facility or equipment (e.g., see Freedman at column 10, lines 25-35).

Hence, the Examiner alleges that, by allowing the central server to retain this data (e.g., see Freedman at Abstract; Figure 2B; and column 5, lines 24-50 and column 8, line 21, to column 10, line 54), user orders can be processed more efficiently (e.g., see Hartman at Abstract; Figures 1C reference numerals 3 and 4; and Figures 8A-8C; column 3, lines 58-66; column 4, lines 30-67; column 5, line 55 to column 6, line 21; and column 6, lines 45-52).

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's position for several reasons.

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, a center server comprising:

> a memory for storing correspondence data in advance, the correspondence data representing which of the plurality of second client computers *is affiliated with* the first client computer of the orderer;
> a first receiving unit for receiving the image specifying data and the orderer specifying data transmitted from said first transmitting unit of said first client computer;
> a determination unit for determining, on the basis of the correspondence data, which of the plurality of second client computers *is affiliated with* the orderer specified by the orderer data received by said first receiving unit; and
> a second transmitting unit for transmitting the image specifying data and the orderer specifying data, which has been received by said first receiving unit, to *one of said plurality of second client computers* that has been determined by said determination unit *to be affiliated with* the orderer specified by the orderer data received by said first receiving unit; ... (emphasis added).

In other words, in the claimed invention, a determination unit determines, on the basis of the correspondence data, which of the plurality of second client computers *is affiliated with the orderer specified by the orderer data* received by the first receiving unit.

Applicant notes that the "*correspondence data*" represents which of the plurality of second client computers is (or are) *affiliated with* the first client computer of the orderer.

Turning to the ordinary meaning of the claim terms, Applicant notes that the phrase "*affiliated with*" or "*affiliate*" generally is defined as "*to adopt or accept as a member, subordinate associate, or branch*" or "*to assign the origin of*" by The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

As another example, Applicant notes that the phrase "*affiliated with*" or "*affiliate*" generally is defined as "*to bring or receive into close connection as a member or branch*" or "*to associate as a member*" or "*to trace the origin of*" by The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary Copyright © 2005.

Applicant notes that the phrase "*affiliated with*" or "*affiliate*" generally is defined as "*to cause a group to become part of or form a close relationship with another, usually larger, group or organization*" by The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Cambridge University Press, Copyright © 2004.

Applicant notes that the ordinary meanings of the claimed phrase are consistent with the use of this phrase in the claims and the present application (e.g., see specification at page 6, lines 2-13, page 15, lines 15-27, page 16, lines 10-25, page 17, lines 2-17, page 20, lines 1-16, page 25, lines 5-22; see also, e.g., Figures 5-13).

Thus, in the claimed invention, the correspondence data can be transmitted from the center server to an *affiliated* second client computer accurately (as opposed to a *non-affiliated* second client computer), even when there are a plurality of second client computers.

In comparison, Applicant submits that Freedman and Hartman, either individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest all of the features of the claimed invention, including "*a determination unit for determining, on the basis of the correspondence data, which of the plurality of second client computers is affiliated with the orderer specified by the orderer data received by said first receiving unit*" as claimed in independent claim 1.

The Examiner alleges that Freedman discloses that the server transmits *image specifying data and all other parameters and other information to the second client computer* (e.g., see Freedman at column 10, lines 27-35). The Examiner alleges that storing this information of Freedman as taught by Hartman would arrive at the claimed invention.

However, Freedman and Hartman, either alone or in combination, do not disclose, suggest, or even mention that any of the parameters or information (whether in disclosed by Freedman or stored by Hartman) includes "*which of the plurality of second client computers is affiliated with the first client computer of the orderer*", as claimed in claim 1 (emphasis added).

That is, the identity data and/or a replica of the receipt (e.g., specifying data, prices), which the Examiner cites in Freedman, clearly are *not* comparable to an *affiliation* between the first client computer and one of the second client computers of a plurality of second client computers, as claimed.

For example, Freedman merely discloses that a requestor is "*provided with information regarding the various job costs, timing, etc. and is given the opportunity to select a particular printing facility, a particular machine, or mix of machines for production of a job*" (e.g., see Freedman at column 10, lines 19-24).

Alternatively, in Freedman, "*the requestor may permit the system to select a particular printing facility or printing equipment for production of the job*" (e.g., see Freedman at column 10, lines 24-26).

However, Freedman does not disclose, suggest, or even mention any kind of *affiliation* between a first client computer and one of a plurality of second client computers, as claimed.

On the other hand, Hartman merely discloses that:

> *The server system receives purchaser information including identification of the purchaser, payment information, and shipment information from the client system. The server system then assigns a client identifier to the client system and associates the assigned client identifier with the received purchaser information. The server system sends to the client system the assigned client identifier and an HTML document identifying the item and including an order button* (e.g. see Hartman at Abstract).

In other words, in Hartman, the client system is determined by the data transmitted from the same client system.

Thus, in Hartman, there also is no *affiliation* between a first client system and one of a plurality of second client systems.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Freedman and Hartman, either individually or in combination, clearly do not disclose or suggest all of the features of the claimed invention.

Applicant submits that claims 2-7, 11-14, 16, 17, and 19-24 also are patentable over Freedman and Hartman, either alone or in combination, for somewhat similar reasons as those set forth above, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

B. Claims 8-10:

Claims 8-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Freedman in view of Hartman and further in view of Greulich.

For somewhat similar reasons as those set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that Greulich also does not disclose or suggest all of the features of independent claim 1, from which claims 8-10 depend, including:

> a memory for storing correspondence data in advance, the correspondence data representing which of the plurality of second client computers *is affiliated with* the first client computer of the orderer; ...
>
> a determination unit for determining, on the basis of the correspondence data, which of the plurality of second client computers *is affiliated with* the orderer specified by the orderer data received by said first receiving unit; and
>
> a second transmitting unit for transmitting the image specifying data and the orderer specifying data, which has been received by said first receiving unit, to *one of said plurality of second client computers* that has been determined by said determination unit *to be affiliated with* the orderer specified by the orderer data received by said first receiving unit (emphasis added).

Therefore, Greulich does not make up for the deficiencies of Freedman and Hartman. Indeed, Greulich is not even relied upon for such features.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 8-10 also are patentable over Freedman, Hartman, and Greulich, either individually or in combination, by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw these rejections and permit these claims to pass to allowance.

III. NEW CLAIMS

New claims 25-33 are added to provide more varied protection for the present invention.

Particularly, new claims 25-33 are added to define more clearly the claimed "*correspondence data*" and the claimed *affiliation* of the plurality of second client computers with the first client computer of the order (e.g., see specification at page 6, lines 2-13, page 15, lines 15-27, page 16, lines 10-25, page 17, lines 2-17, page 20, lines 1-16, page 25, lines 5-22; see also, e.g., Figures 5-13). No new matter is added.

For example, claim 25 recites, *inter alia*, that:

> *the correspondence data which represents which of the plurality of second client computers is affiliated with the first client computer of the orderer, comprises:*

> *a management information database including at least one of a table of user names, a table of company names, a table of company - user link information, a table of company master - slave information, a table for setting system services, a table for setting printing services, an order table, a product table, and a table for specifying consignees* (emphasis added).

As another example, claim 26 recites, *inter alia*, that:

> *at least two of the table of company names, the table of company - user link information, the table of company master - slave information, the table for setting system services, the table for setting printing services, are linked to each other by company identification (ID) data* (emphasis added).

As a further example, claim 27 recites, *inter alia*, that:

> *at least two of the table of user names, the table of company - user link information, and the order table are linked to each other by user identification (ID) data* (emphasis added).

As another example, claim 28 recites, *inter alia*, that:

> *the table for setting printing services and the order table are linked to each other by service identification (ID) data* (emphasis added).

As yet another example, claim 29 recites, *inter alia*, that:

> *the order table and the product table are linked to each other by product number data* (emphasis added).

As a further example, claim 30 recites, *inter alia*, that:

> *the order table and the table for specifying consignees are linked to each other by consignee service identification (ID) data* (emphasis added).

As a further example, claim 31 recites, *inter alia*, that:

> *the correspondence data which represents which of the plurality of second client computers is affiliated with the first client computer of the orderer, comprises:*
>
> *master - slave relationships between a plurality of first client computers for orderers and said plurality of second client computers for the laboratory* (emphasis added).

As a further example, claim 32 recites, *inter alia*, that:

> *wherein said master - slave relationships between a plurality of first client computers for orderers and said plurality of second client computers for the laboratory, comprise:*
>
> *relationships between at least two of user name information, user identification information, company name information, company identification information, company - user link information, company master - slave information, system services information, printing services information, order tables, product tables, and consignee information* (emphasis added).

As a further example, claim 33 recites, *inter alia*, that:

> *wherein said determination unit determines, using the correspondence data, whether one of the plurality of second client computers is affiliated with the orderer specified by the orderer data received by said first receiving unit; and*
>
> *wherein, if said determination unit determines, using the correspondence data, that one of the plurality of second client*

> *computers is affiliated with the orderer, then said second transmitting unit transmits the image specifying data and the orderer specifying data to said one of the plurality of second client computers determined to be affiliated with the orderer* (emphasis added).

Applicant submits that the cited references, either individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the features recited in new claims 25-33. Thus, Applicant submits that claims 25-33 are in condition for immediate allowance and respectfully requests the same.

IV. FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully reiterates the request that the Examiner acknowledge the receipt of and accept the replacement drawings filed on April 23, 2004, by checking the appropriate boxes on the Office Action Summary.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 1-14, 16, 17, and 19-33, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date: MARCH 30, 2005

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